THE POWER INITIATIVE

2021-22

FINAL REPORT

FPHYA
YOUTH DIALOGUE SESSIONS:
RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

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The following is a report is from a series of community dialogue sessions exploring racism as a public health crisis from a youth perspective, an initiative of the Flint Public Health Youth Academy. Data reported was collected and analyzed by the Power Initiative.

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Overview

The Flint Public Health Youth Academy (FPHYA) is an innovative "pathways to careers" concept in Flint. The program is designed to engage and introduce urban youth into careers in public health, medicine and research.

This FPHYA project consisted of hosting a series of youth dialogue sessions on racism meant to culminate in the formation of a Youth Action Council (YAC) tasked with drafting a strategic plan to operationalize racism as a public health crisis. The purpose of each dialogue session was to engage participants ages 13-22 in transparent conversation. This project required development, management and facilitation of systems that engaged youth participants, adult leadership and community partners.

Objectives

- Engage 50 session participants
- Identify 20 YAC prospects
- Format session templates

Data Collection Tools

- Sign-up
- Registration/Sign-in
- Session Notes
- Recordings
- Survey
- YAC Application

Sessions

DATES	ATTENDEES	YAC APPS
6.25.21	9	3
6.28.21	2	1
6.29.21	8	4
6.30.21	2	1
7.14.21	41	7
8.3.21	6	3
1.18.22	13	4

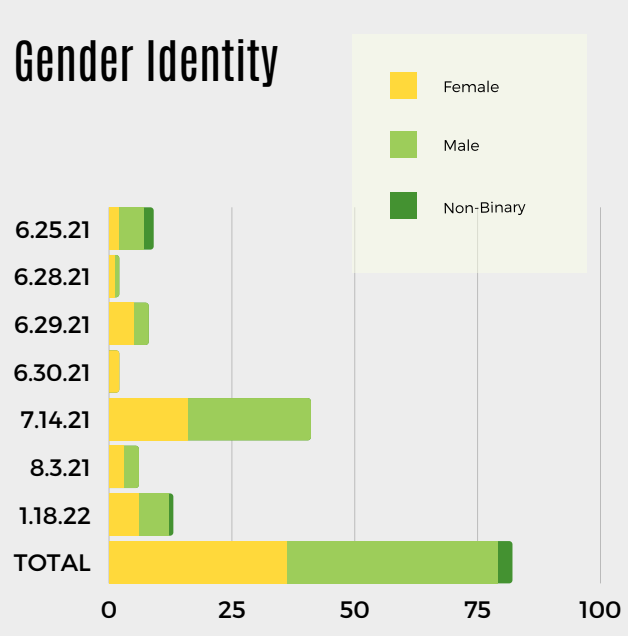
Outcomes

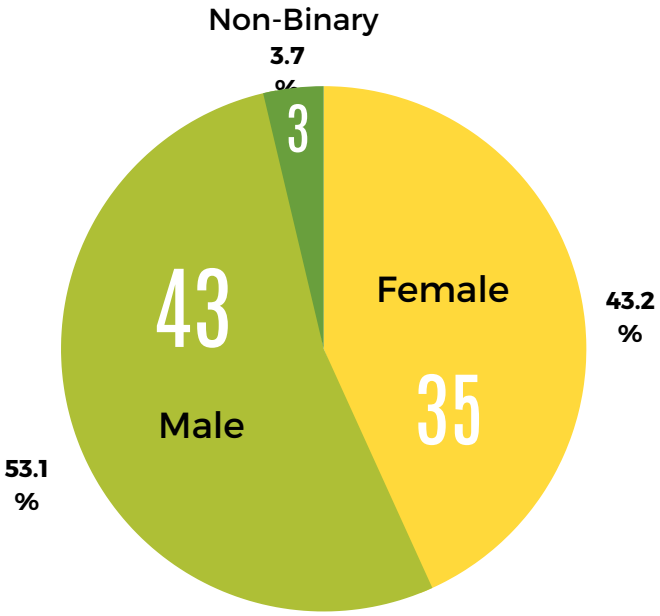
- 81 session participants
- 23 YAC applicants
- Facilitator Tool Kit

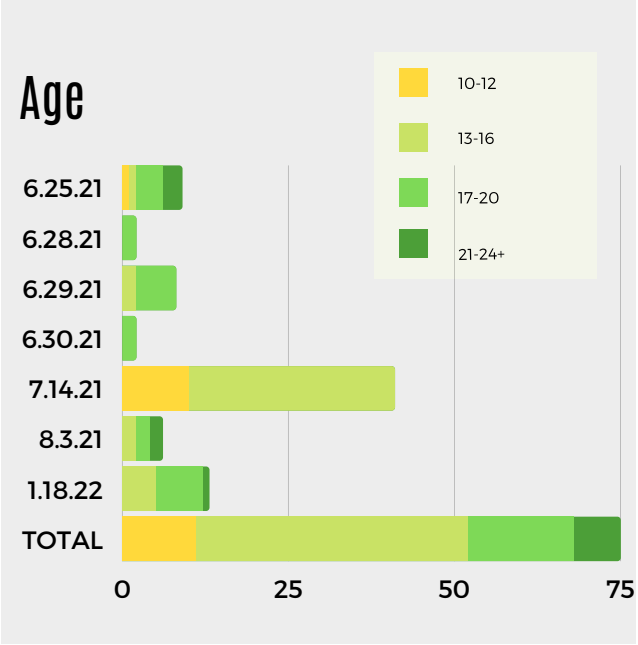
Demographics

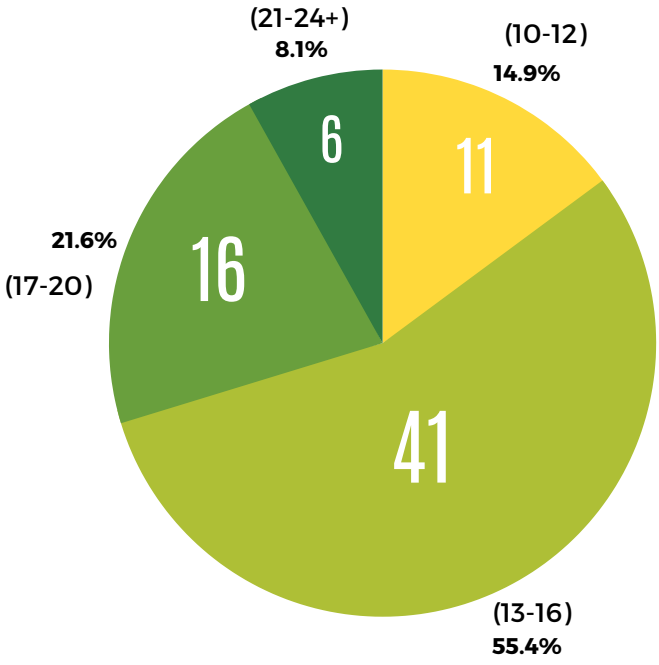
Gender Identity & Age

Demographic data was collected prior to the start of each session. Virtual meeting participant demographics were input via the Zoom registration feature. In person meeting participant demographics were collected via digital sign-in form. The following data is self-identified by participants.





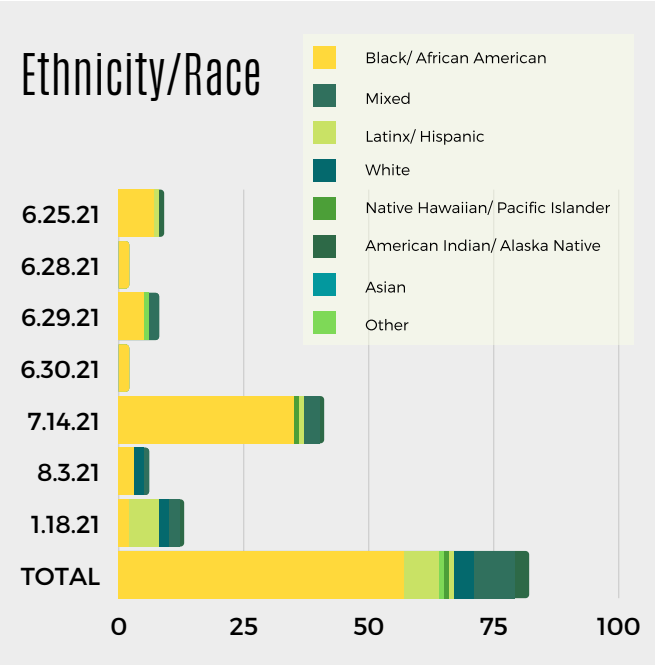


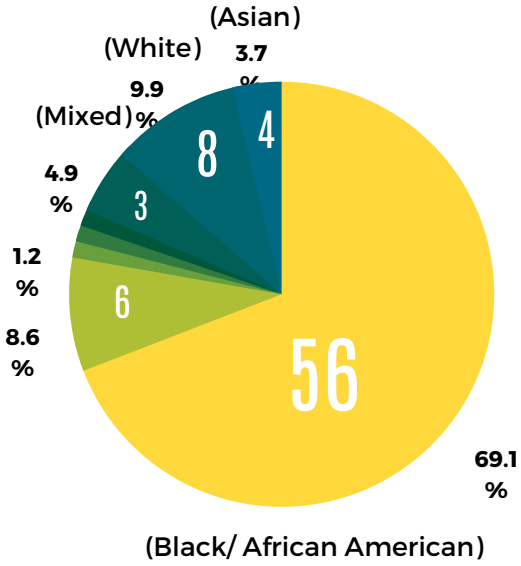


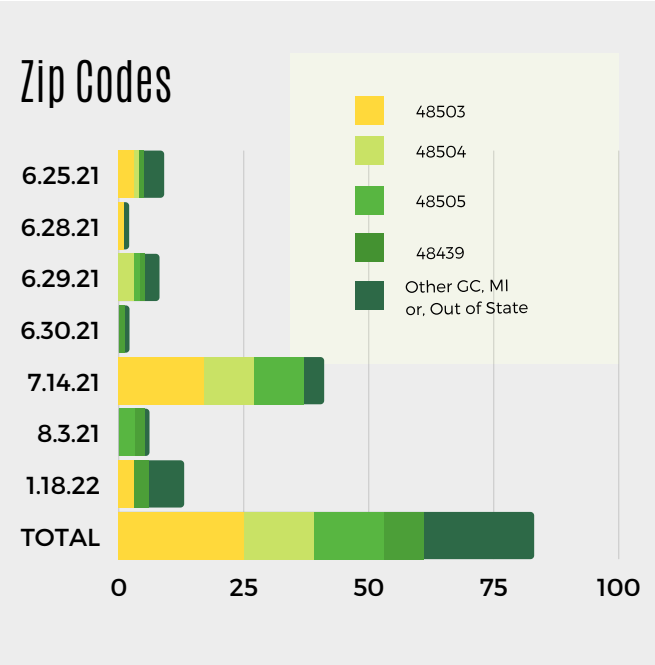
Demograpics

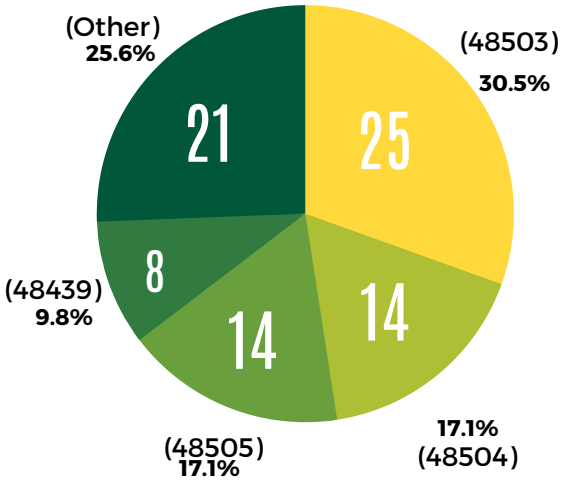
Ethnicity & Race

The following data is self-identified by participants. There were 81 total participants across the 7 sessions.





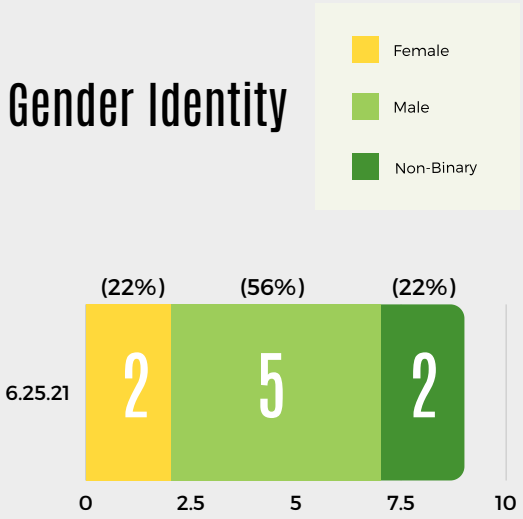




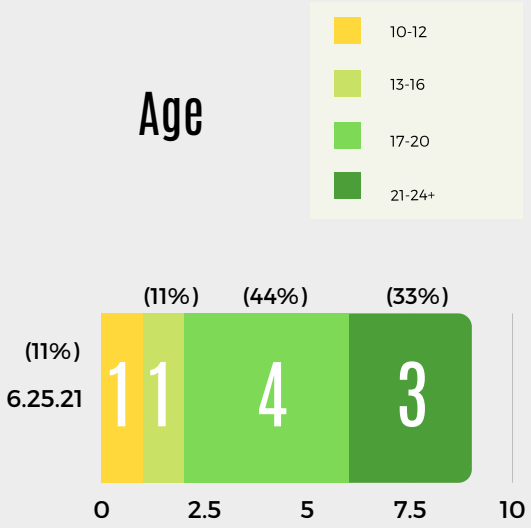
6.25.2021 Session

Demographic Data

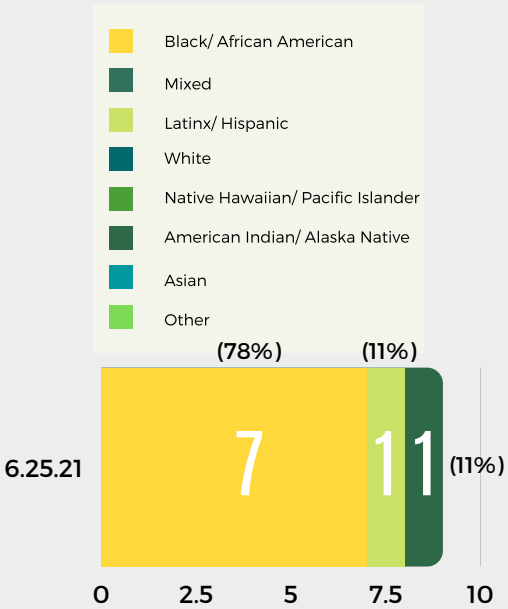
Gender Identity



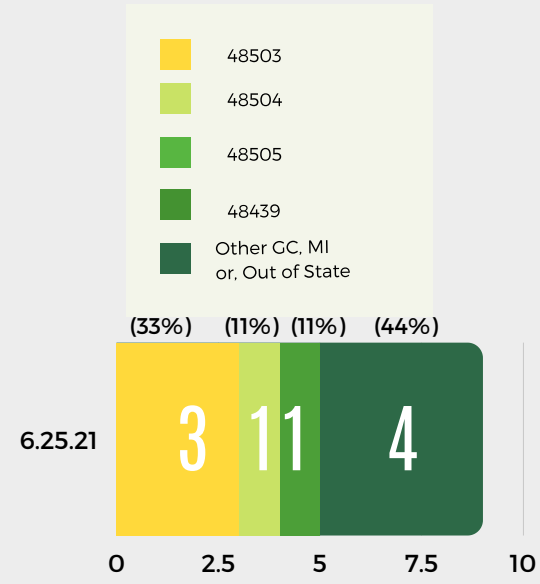
Age



Ethnicity/Race



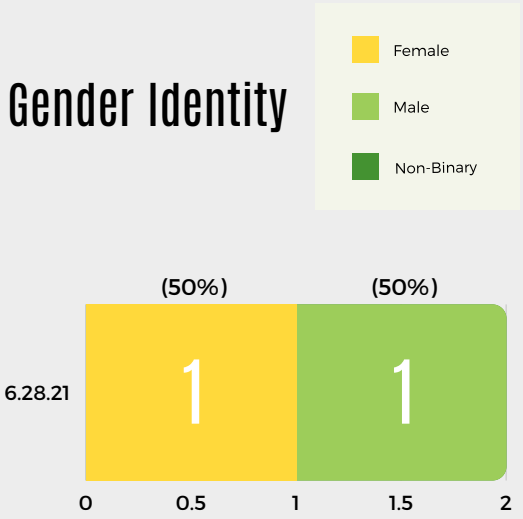
Zip Codes



6.28.2021 Session

Demographic Data

Gender Identity



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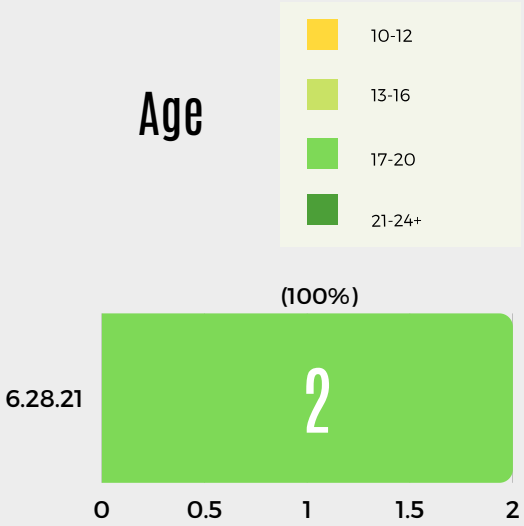
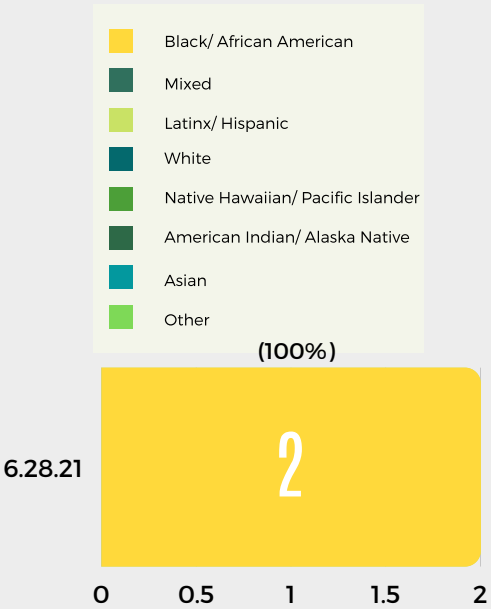


Ethnicity/Race



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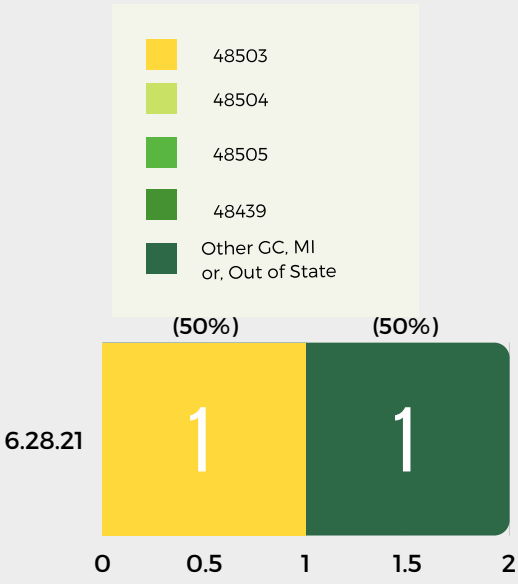
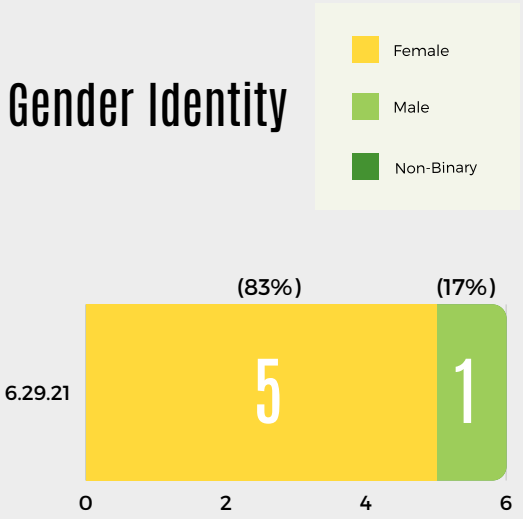


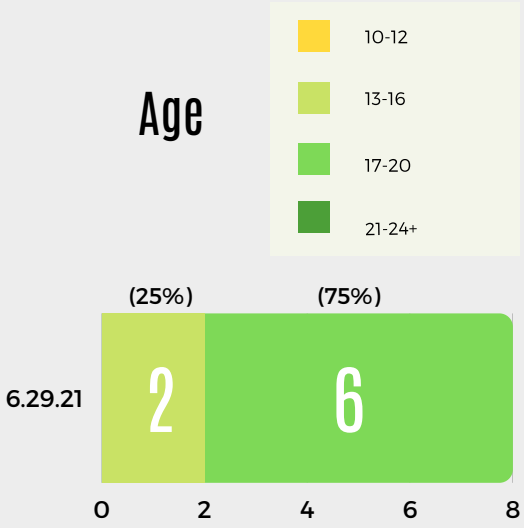
6.29.2021 Session

Demographic Data

Gender Identity



Age



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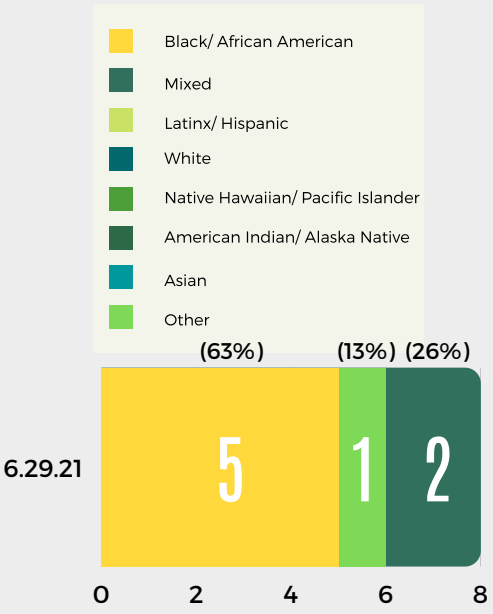

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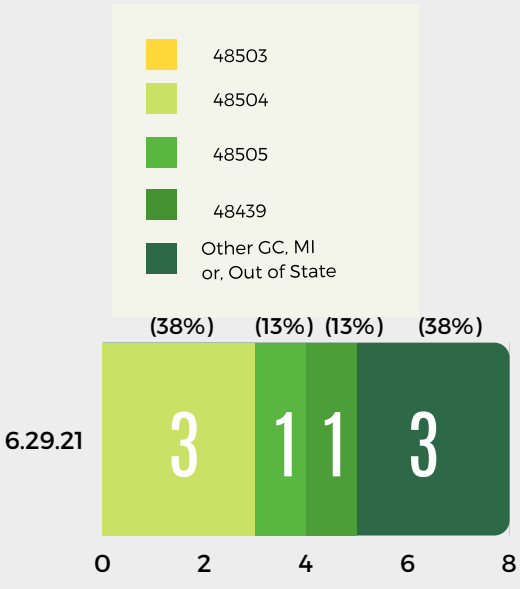
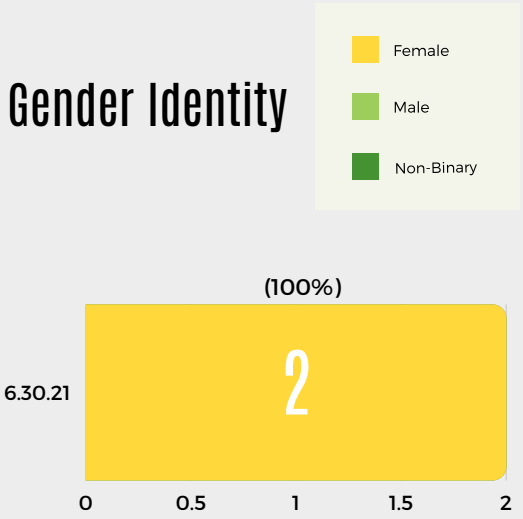


6.30.2021 Session

Demographic Data

Gender Identity



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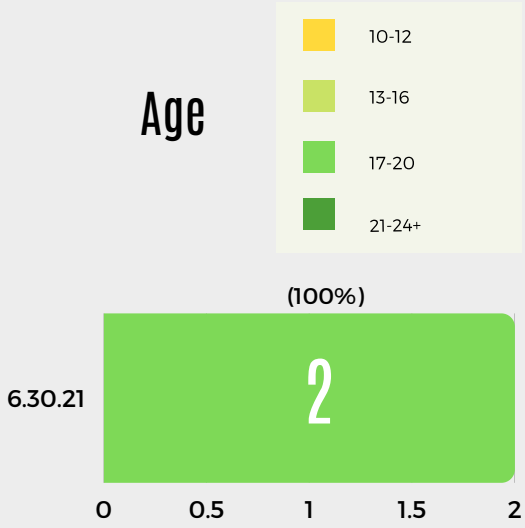
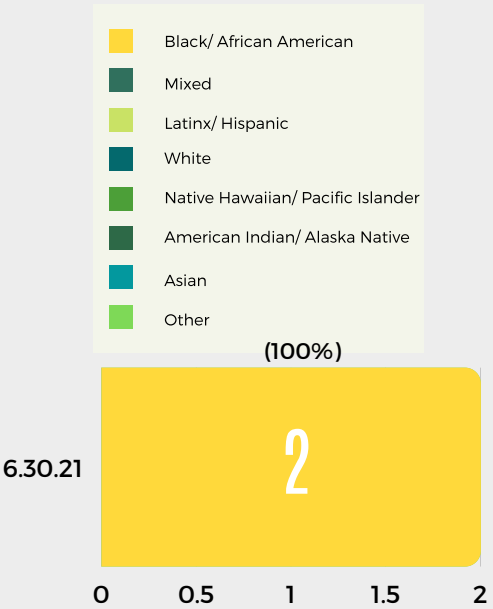


Ethnicity/Race



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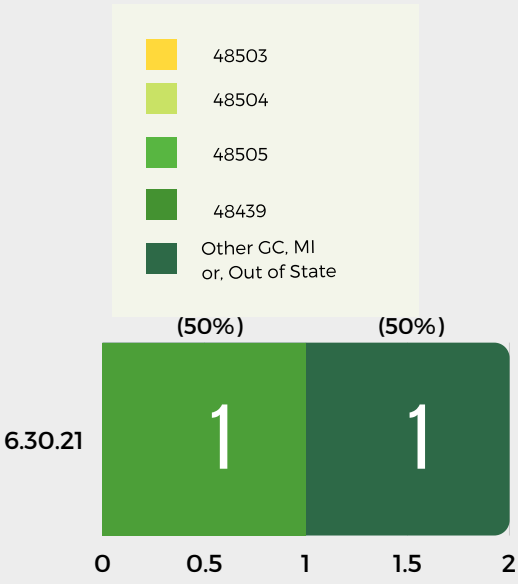
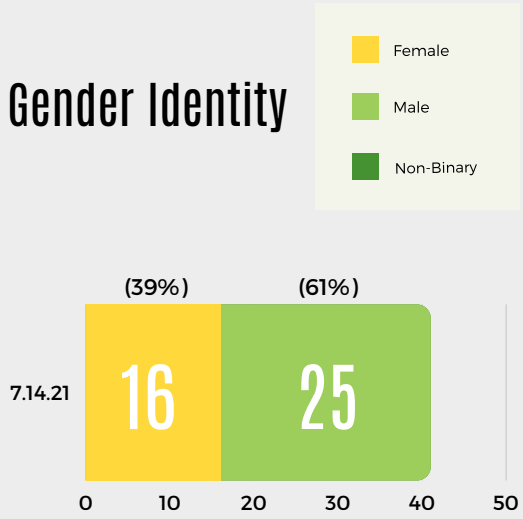


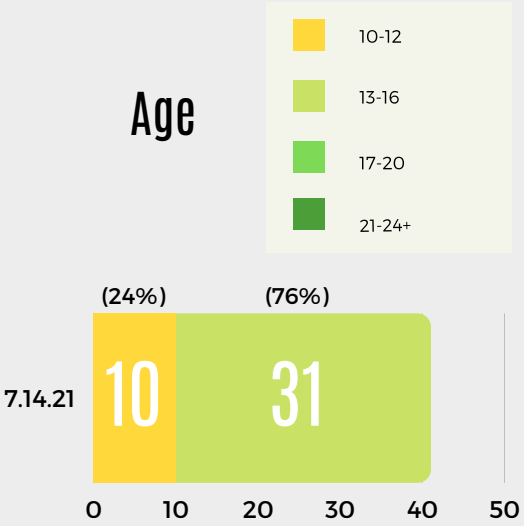
7.14.2021 Session

Demographic Data

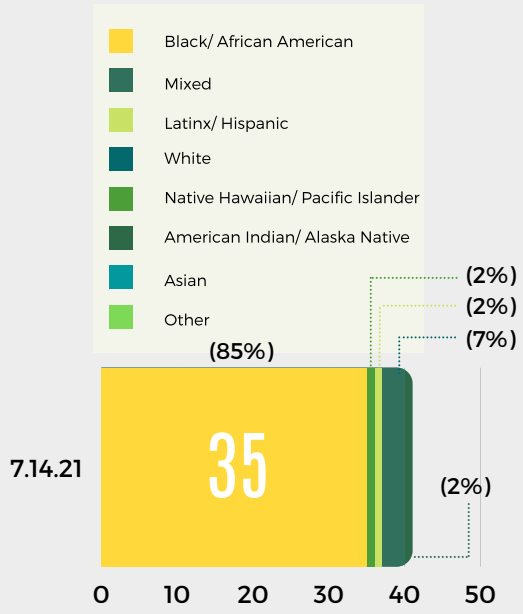
Gender Identity



Age



Ethnicity/Race



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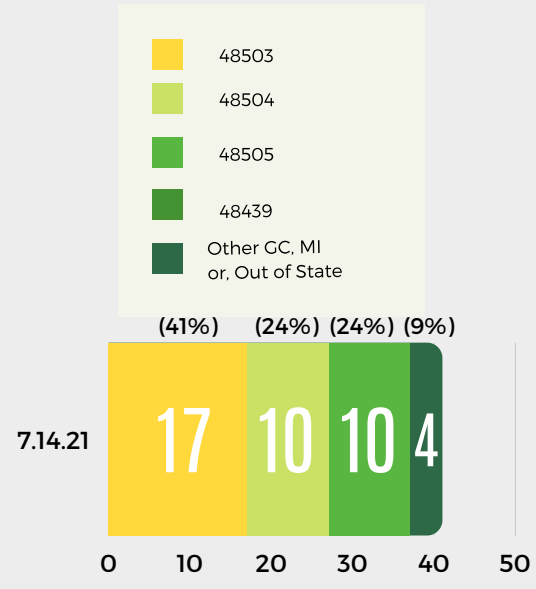
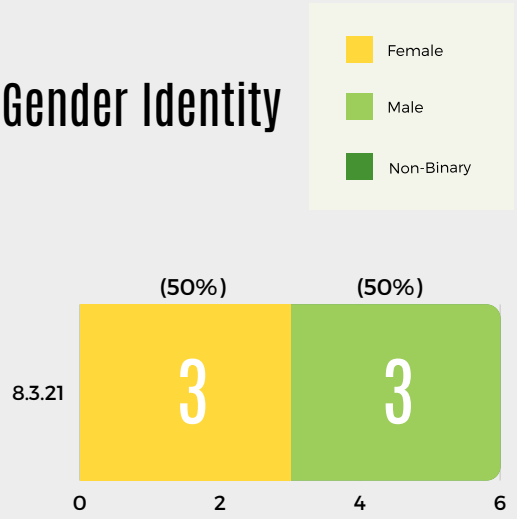


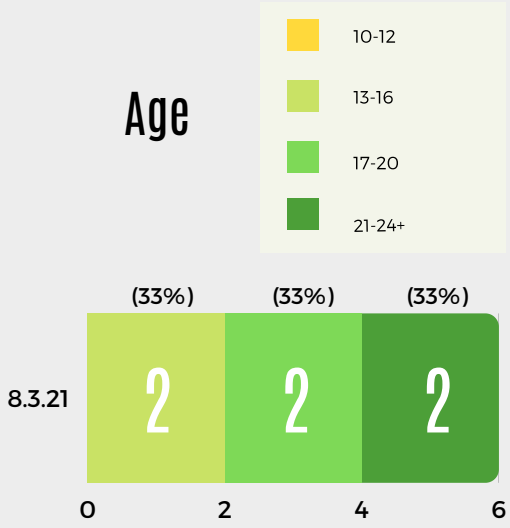
8.3.2021 Session

Demographic Data

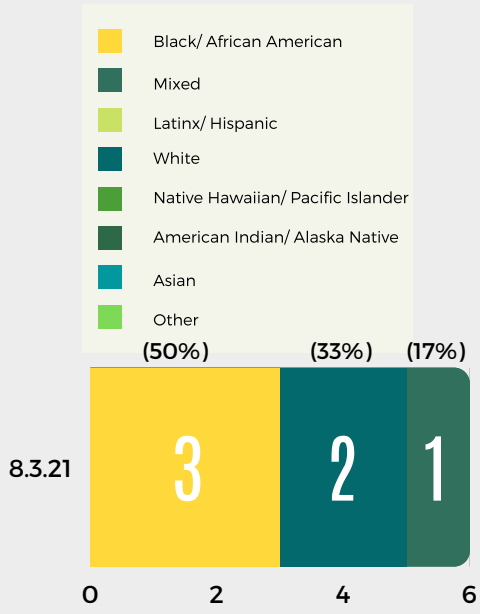
Gender Identity



Age



Ethnicity/Race



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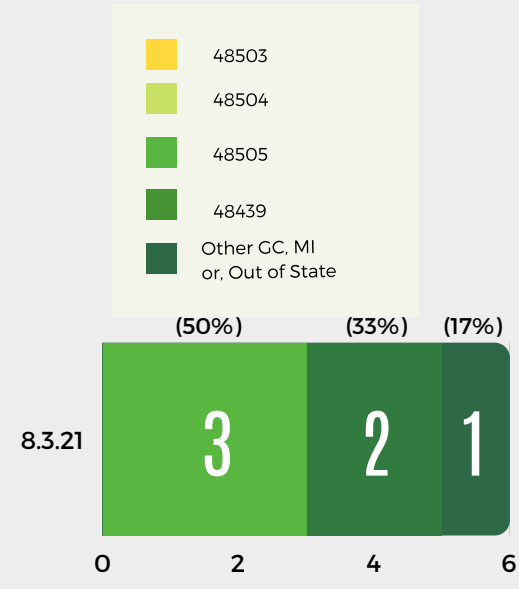
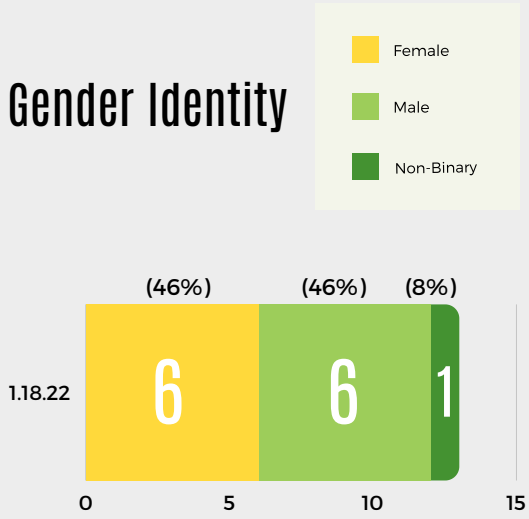


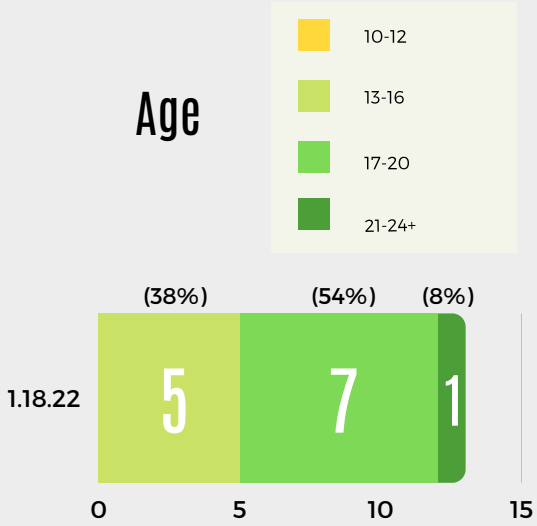
1.18.2022 Session

Demographic Data

Gender Identity



Age



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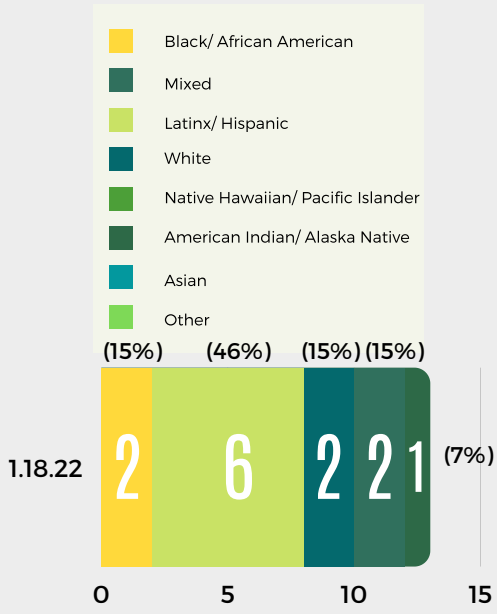

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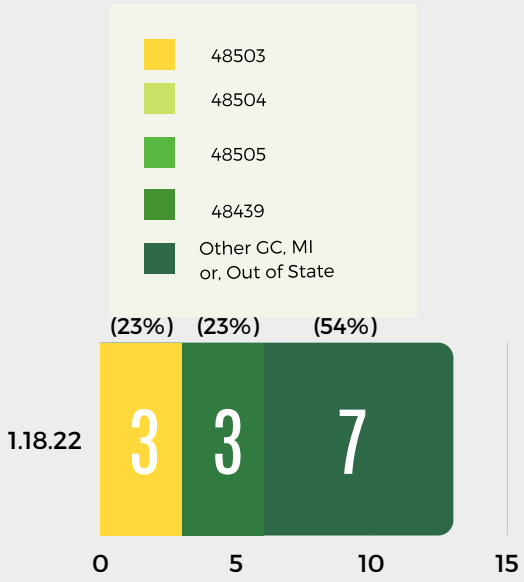


Responses

Dialogue & Survey

Participants were asked the following questions during each dialogue session. There were 81 session participants and 71 survey respondents. Data displayed in charts or graphs are a reflection of survey results. Response trends, quotes, key words and phrases, are a reflection of session notes and recordings.

What is racism?

What age did you know racism was real?

Have you ever experienced racism?

What does racism look like?

Why does racism exist?

What does a community free of racism look like?

On a scale of 1-10, 1 being free of racism and 10 being extremely racist, how would you rate the level of racism in Genesee County?

What is racism?

" The active feeling or idea, having a philosophy of prejudice against someone else because of their race"

"It's prejudice or discrimination against somebody because of their race."

" When you're judged by the color of your skin."

"Any physical or verbal action done to someone due to their race/ethnicity, or about their race/ethnicity."

"As an overarching general thing, it is a system that serves to subjugate certain communities in an effort to uplift others."

Responses to this question ranged from macro concepts to specific scenarios youth associated with racism. Although individual responses varied, there were some distinct differences between each group, in terms of how they answered the questions. The depth and transparency of contributions shared, frequency with which participants verbalized responses to the contributions of others, and range of divergent and convergent ideas shared varied by group. We found that most responses to this question described one of the following:

SITUATIONAL EXAMPLE

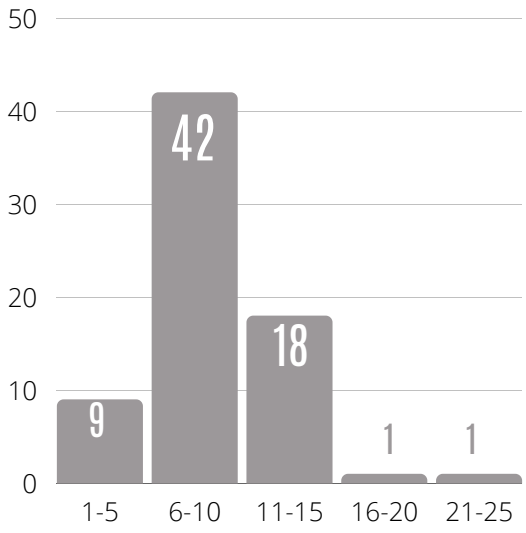
BEHAVIOR

ABSTRACT IDEA

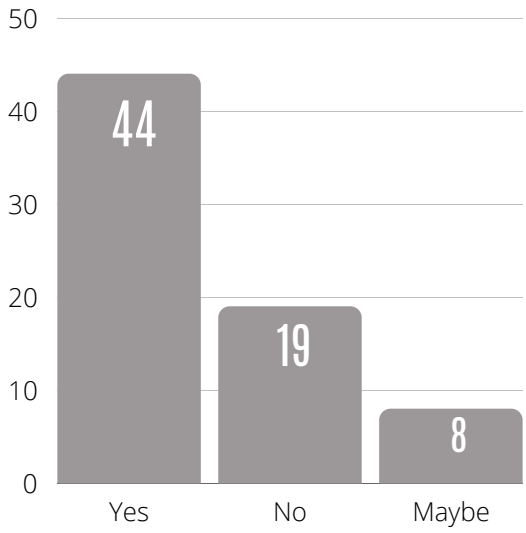
Key words & phrases

- Prejudice
- Shows up in different ways
- Institutions
- Different
- Judgement
- Systematic
- Targeting
- Based on color
- Discrimination

At what age did you know racism was real?



Have you ever experienced racism?



" I've never really experienced it formal, just heard about it and seen stuff on the news and social media."

" Parents of my friends would not allow me to come over and hang out"

" I was with my mom returning something at Meijer and the staff ignored her. They were overtly nice, but they ignored her..."

" I was in a class where my teacher would do stuff like give other kids treats and not me, be more friendly with other students, keep me more distanct..."

Participants were asked to respond to the first question by showing a number with their hands or dropping a note in the virtual chat. In addition to answering each question as asked, some individuals recalled the experience that made them realize racism existed. The nature of this question is personal in comparison to the opening question which was more theoretical.

of participants have experienced racism

What does racism look like?

" Being followed in a store because you're Black."

" It can come person to person or systematically or in the form of implicit bias, people discriminating in ways they don't even know, having different thought in your head"

" Racism looks like any mean, hateful, any time of discrimination against someone else based on who they are."

"It's not easy to put a face on racism. A lot of it is invisible, things you cannot place your eyes on."

Responses to this question describe perceptions of how racism manifests. Most responses alluded to 3 different forms of racism: limiting resources, identity and perceptions, and behavior and language.

Different forms	Key words & phrases
LIMITING RESOURCES [systemic/ structural racism]	• Academic • Housing • Financial discrimination • Health disparities
IDENTITY & PERCEPTIONS [bias/ stereotypes]	• Adultification of Black kids • Blackface • Infitilization of Black adults • Social media
BEHAVIOR & LANGUAGE [overt]	• Differential treatment • Verbal discrimination

Why does racism exist?

"Stupid people do stupid things."

"Because of people's parents. A child is not racist."

"To create a superiority complex."

"Racism is a social construct, because it [race] almost seems non-existent.

"In my opinion, racism exists because it is learned. We listen to many people throughout our life time, and some of those hateful words end up sticking with us."

Each question asked is a gradual elevation along the hierarchy of Bloom's Taxonomy. Prompts transitioned youth from remembering to understanding.

As the level of learning engagement increased, the depth of participant contribution grew as well. Participant responses suggested 3 core reasons for why racism exists: people, systems and traditions.

Core reasons	Key words & phrases
PEOPLE [intrinsic motivators]	• Control • Fear • Hate • Jealousy • Superiority • Ignorance
SYSTEMS [external influences]	• Capitalism • Curriculum • Hierarchy • Institutions
TRADITIONS [historic practices]	• Colonialism • Families • Generations • Separation • Servitude • Slavery

What does a community free of racism look like?

" A mixture of different people like at school, mixture of communities despite color, integration"

"We need Black Wall streets, our own schools"

"It looks equitable, everyone is getting the care that they need in order to enact the lives they want"

"A community free of racism would look like a society that is accepting of one another."

"No matter what we do racism will always exist and we wont ever escape it."

Responses to this question ranged from skepticism to various solutions. While some youth imagined the absence of racism to look like a mixture of cultures co-existing, others thought of separation and the prioritization of distinct cultural identities. Multiple respondents expressed sentiments of disbelief. This group of youth did not believe in the possibility of ever existing without racism or some type of "ism". We found that most responses described a community without racism with one the following sentiments:

IMPOSSIBLE

INTEGRATION

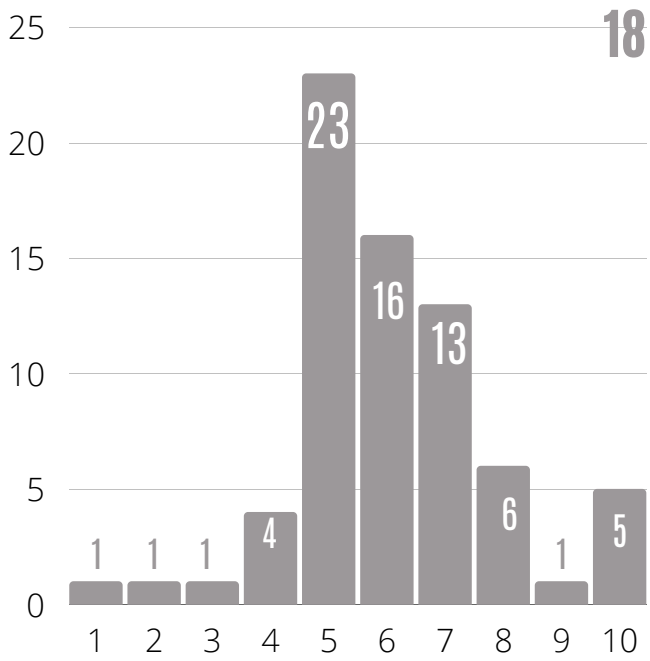
INDEPENDENCE

Key words & phrases

- Different
- Appreciation
- Mixed
- Getting along
- Education
- Hard to imagine
- Sharing resources
- Equal

How would you rate the level of racism in Genesee County?

[On a scale of 1-10, 1 being free of racism and 10 being extremely racist]



90 percent of participants gave a rating of 5 or more.

"Racism in Genesee County is real and alive, especially when it comes to individuals running for offices."

" I have rolled through the [suburbs] and barely seen anyone close to looking like me."

"It's not overt, so I wont way it's the worst. I've been worse places."

"Genesee County isn't the most diverse county, so when people look at racism they thing Black and White. But, because of that there's isms" that go unchecked and instersectionaliy."

In addition to rating the level of racism in Genesee County on a scale of 1-10, 1 being free of racism and 10 being extremely racist, youth were asked to share the factors that influenced their decisions. In one session, multiple youth referenced a shooting that occurred during a 2021 Juneeteenth parade as a contributing factor to their rating of racism in Genesee County.

What are some solutions for ending racism?

What needs to happen for you to move your score closer to 1?

" People need to stop saying mean things out loud"

"Find ways to create economic equity, that solves a lot of problems"

"Policy could potentially remove some of the things we have issues with"

"If there were more events during the summer for different schools and students to interact"

Prior to this point, dialogue topics focused on youth recollection of personal experiences and reflection on perspectives. This question transitioned responses to envisioning and creating. We found that most solutions shared related to one of the following categories:

CONVERSATION

EDUCATION

ACTION

Key words & phrases

- Policy
- Reparations
- Consequences
- Accumulated Knowledge
- Acknowledging it exists
- Information
- No cops
- Work together
- Awareness

Applications

Youth Action Council

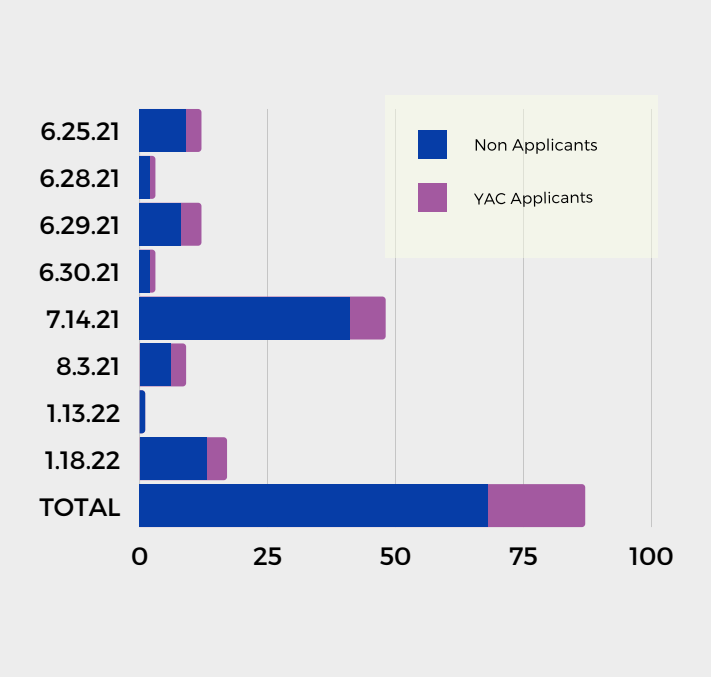
These were questions asked of individuals who expressed that they were interested to participate as part of the YAC.

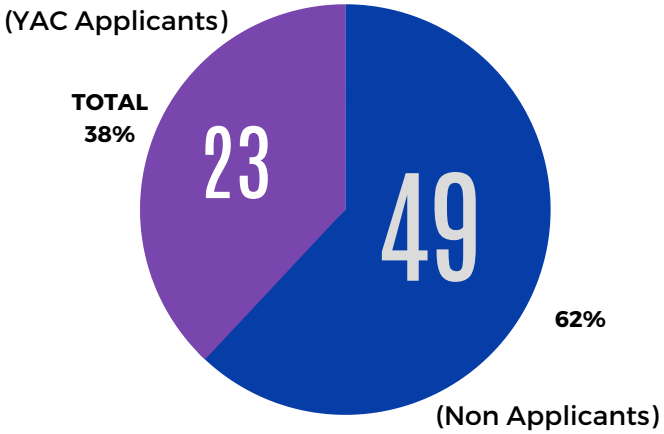
Why are you interested in serving on the FPHYA YAC?

What institution do you currently attend/did you graduate from?

What organizations, programs, and/or extracurricular activities have you been involved in?

Do you have equitable access to technology at home?





71 Total Respondents

Reflection

"I appreciate you all for holding this much needed conversation. I appreciate the insight that I've received here. Stay safe and let your royalty show." - Session Participant

1

ESTABLISH A SAFE SPACE

Make agreements before entering conversation. For this session we each agreed to be mindful, share insight, listen respectfully and be present.

2

GET ACQUAINTED

Ensure that everyone has an opportunity to introduce themselves to each other. Prior to further discussion about the session, we asked each participant to share their name and one of their superpowers (strength or ability). We minimized talking about ourselves. This loosened up the room.

3

CONNECT TO A "WHY"

Establish importance by making the session purpose personal. Explain the big picture and foster opportunities for participants to connect themselves to it. Prior to the conversation we took time to share background on FPHYA and racism as a public health crises.

4

ASK QUESTIONS

Be inquisitive without being biased. We asked the questions as they were written without alluding to our personal feelings about what was being asked. This built trust, and encouraged youth to share their perspectives as opposed to what they thought we wanted to hear

5

LISTEN

Receive participant input and document it as shared. We listened to what the youth wanted to share without response or reaction. Our approach in facilitating is to ask questions that evoke engagement and minimize our interruption of the flow of conversation.

Next Steps

01

Youth Action Council

As FPHYA builds out the work of the Youth Action Council (YAC), the immediate next step is to secure funding and other resources to create and develop year-long programming that infuse Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation approaches in programming and summer camps.

02

Scalability/Partner Expansion

There are over 6 other municipalities from across the nation that have requested FPHYA chapters. FPHYA proposes to train leadership in those municipalities on their curriculum and anti-racism work. In addition, FPHYA will share best practices for health communications and messaging from a youth perspective.

03

National Forum

FPHYA's ultimate goal is to launch the National Public Health Youth Academy (NPHYA) program and host the first national youth forum "Racism as a Public Health Crisis: A Youth Perspective".

Acknowledgements

- The Greater Flint Covid-19 Task Force on Racial Inequities - Faith Subcommittee
- Community Foundation of Greater Flint
- Flint ReCAST (City of Flint)
- Community Based Organization Partners (CBOP)
- YouthQuest (Flint and Genesee Group)

Contact

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THE POWER INITIATIVE

Resources

01

FACILITATOR TOOL KIT

- Dialogue Guide
- In-person Session Signage
- Recruitment Strategy

02

SESSION FORMS

- Sign-up
- Registration
- Attendance
- Survey
- YAC Applications

03

DATA HUB

- Progress Report
- Survey Responses
- Sign-in Responses
- Recordings
- Session Notes
- YAC Applications